



Week 12 - Man's Sin and Redemption

Sin is irrational.

Look at the headlines... multimillionaires go to prison for a few thousand dollars, people murder on a whim, take drugs to their own harm. It does not make sense. Sin breaks lives, homes, families, relationships, and societies. God did not give us the Ten Commandments to spoil our fun, but so that we might be happy, productive and fulfilled in every way. As ABC's Ted Koppel told a graduating class at Duke University, the Ten Commandments are not the "Ten Suggestions. "

Still, if God is so good, why is there so much evil in the world? Simply put, the problems of society do not come from the nature of God, but from the nature of people. If God removed all evil from the earth, we could be among the first to go! The honest observer does not blame God, but rather agrees with Pogo that, "We've met the enemy, and he is us. " Furthermore, God created us with free will, not as automatons. As James Dobson has said: "God gave us free choice because there is no significance to love that knows no alternative. "

The Bible teaches us that we are sinners (Romans 3:23), dead in sin (Ephesians 2:5), unable to do good unto salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9), and desperately in need of divine intervention in order to be right with God (John 3:16). We do not come to God for salvation on our own initiative. Theologians call this fatal condition the "depravity of man. " See also the following verse:

"The Lord has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside, together they have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one." (Psalm 14:2-3)

Church Father, St. Augustine described his former condition vividly:

"Your anger had grown hot at my doings, yet I did not know. I was deafened by that clanking chain of my mortal state which was the punishment for my soul's pride, and I was wandering away from you..." (The Confessions of St. Augustine).

Human depravity does not mean people are unable to do good things. The biblical view does not denigrate the talents and inherent value God gives us from our conception. The intrinsic value of every man and woman as created by God endures, even though each of us outside of Him continues to rebel and stray from Him.

Nevertheless, God is not impressed with any “spiritual” efforts on our part to be restored to Him. He who sees all things and knows the heart says, “All have gone astray” (Isaiah 53:6), and “there is none that does good” (Romans 3:12). “Depravity” means that no one can save himself or improve his spiritual condition unless God intervenes through His Son, Jesus: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

God’s Plan for Redemption

“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)

God was never surprised. Jesus’ incarnation, death and resurrection was not some ad-hoc stop-gap solution. The Old Testament makes it clear that God had foreseen that man would abuse free will to rebel against Him, and that He Himself would engineer their salvation. God’s redemptive acts are manifest throughout history.

Promises and Provisions for Redemption

“For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.” (Ephesians 1:4)

From Adam and Eve Immediately after Adam and Eve’s rebellion, God begins promising His salvation to mankind. When God spoke to the guilty pair, he also spoke to Satan who enticed them, saying, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel” (Genesis 3:15). This “seed,” this offspring of the woman, would have victory over Satan. This victory promised to God’s servants is fulfilled in Christ Himself: “When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through it” (Colossians 2:15; see also: 1 Corinthians 15:57; Revelation 15:2).

Abraham and Israel

Lacking fellowship with God, mankind followed original sin with increased wickedness. Out of this morass God plucked a man named Abraham and made Him His friend (James 2:23). Through Abraham and his offspring God created the nation of Israel, from which the Savior would be born. God’s promise to Abraham shows us a glimpse of the Messiah and the hope He would bring to the world: “in you all the families of the earth will be blessed” (Genesis 12:3). Israel brought forth the Messiah, received the law of God, witnessed to Him, and were a people set apart for Himself (Romans 9:4).

Rebellion and Judgment

In many places, the Bible declares that God's purpose for punishment is redemptive, to draw us back to Himself and His ways, and to preserve a people who know and seek Him. We see this in the accounts of Noah's flood (Genesis 6-9), where God preserved mankind from annihilation, and the tower of Babel (Genesis 11), where He preserved us from unrestrained wickedness. We see this in the judgments of Israel and her neighbors. The book of Hosea presents a beautiful picture of how God judged His people for their sin but also drew them back to Himself.

"I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, in lovingkindness and in compassion, and I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness. Then you will know the Lord." (Hosea 3:19-20)

The Incarnation

Finally, Revelation 13:8 reveals that God's plan of redemption was in place before mankind was even created: Jesus is "...the Lamb that was slain before the creation of the world. "

Review:

1. How is sin is "irrational"?
2. What is God's ultimate plan for man's sin problem?
3. What is God's ultimate purpose for judgment?